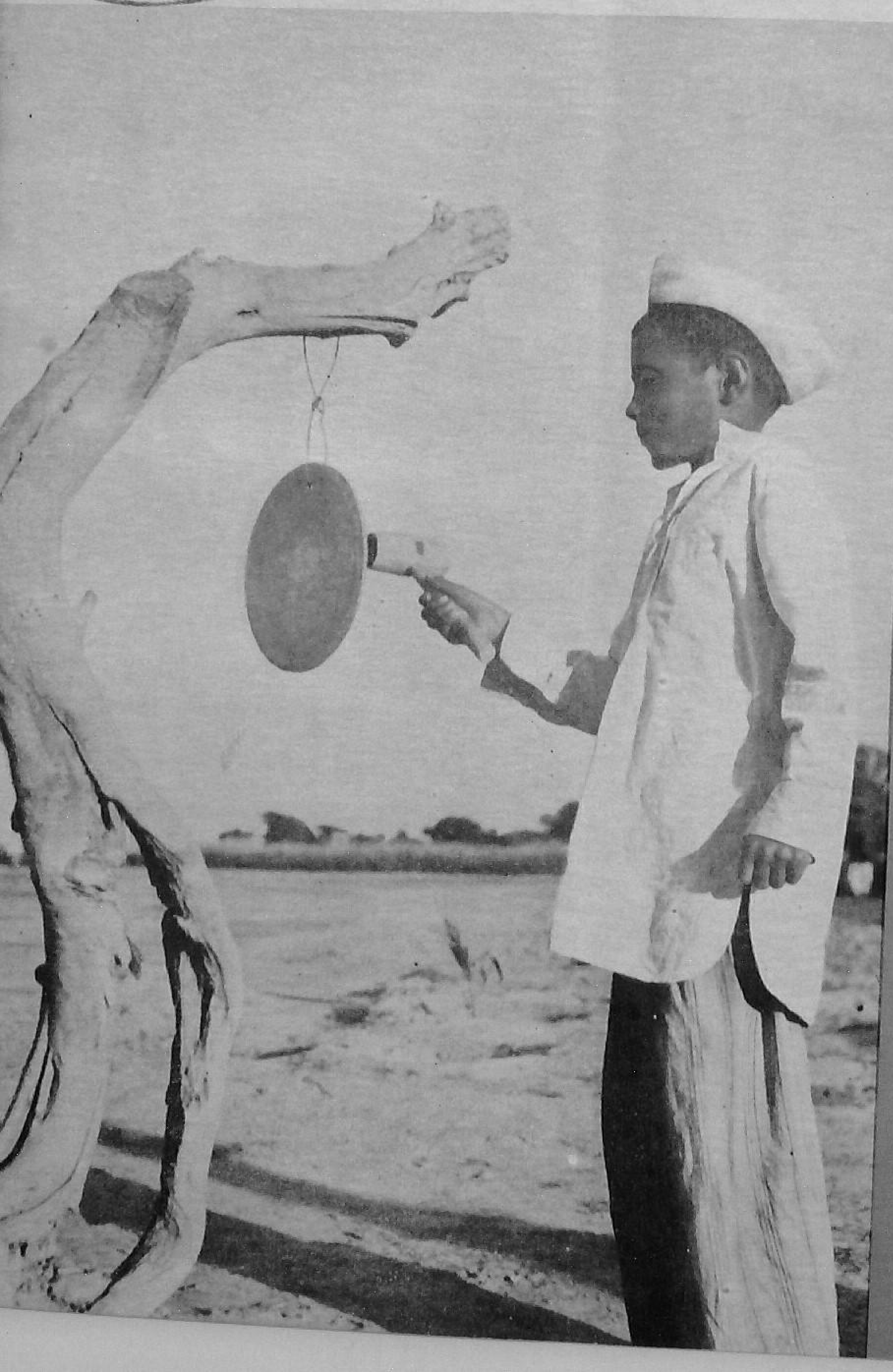
Panchayati Raj

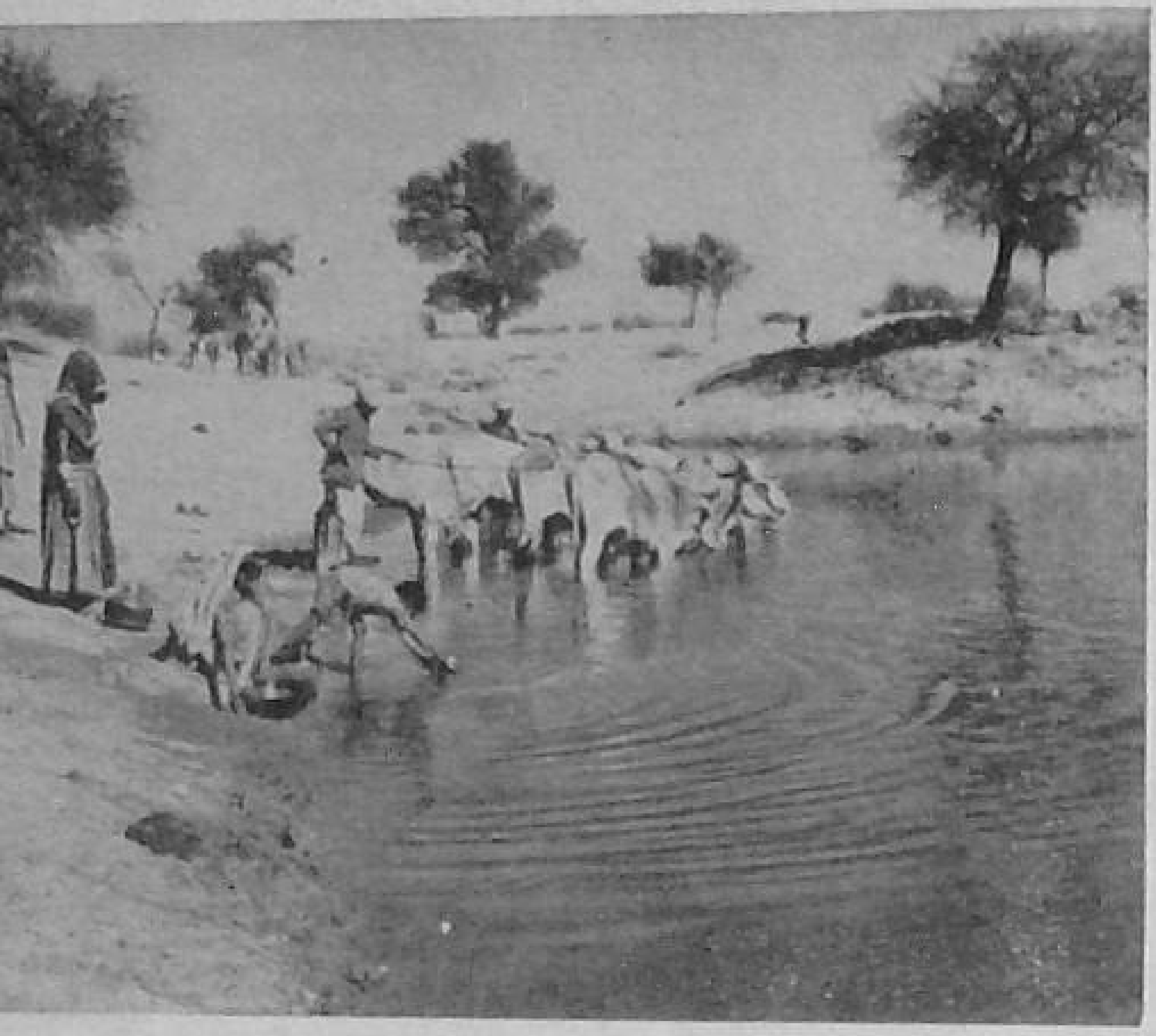
3 - APR 1962
KOVILPATTI
RURAL EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE

MARCH 1962

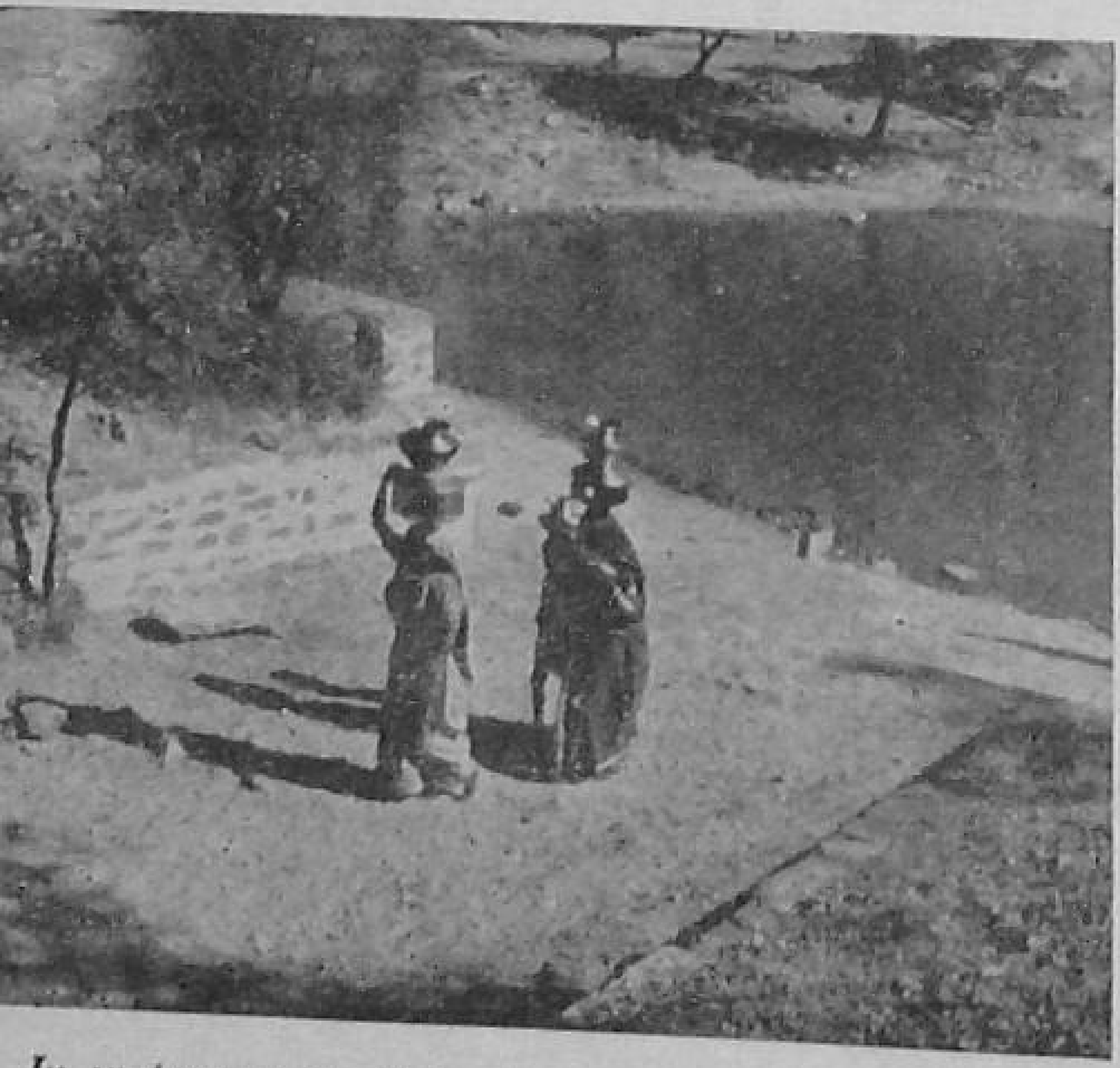


"SCHOOL CHALO"—calls the morning bell rung by a young volunteer. The village school-chalo-movement has made rapid progress under the Panchayati Raj.

DRINKING WATER



There are not many tanks amidst the sand dunes of Rajasthan. But where they exist, they are a blessing. There both men and cattle vie with one another to quench their thirst.



In water-scarce Rajasthan, the lot of the women-folk is hard indeed. Day in and day out they have to trek long distances to fetch water for daily consumption in their houses. They carry on their heads two to three pitchers full of water from the tanks to their homes.

NAGAURS' PROBLEM No. 1

Camel, rightly known as the 'Ship of the des comes in handy to bring water in leather bags far-off wells and tanks.

Pitchers full of water are brought in carts, too precious life-giving water thus brought fron and wide is, no doubt, used most economically. goat has its share of rationed water in a basin the hands of the owner himself.

PRINCIPAL
4 - APR
RURAL EX... CENTRE

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FACING THE RISKS

THE ADVANTAGES of Panchayati Raj are many and obvious. But the risks involved also should not be lost sight of. These have to be understood and guarded against to make Panchayati Raj a success.

DANGERS AHEAD

The greatest danger is that our villagers are, by and large, illiterate and uneducated. They have not got adequate awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a democratic country. Besides, the running of administration demands some basic knowledge of administrative rules and regulations, a certain amount of skill in planning and organising which they lack at the moment. Another glaring defect that might hamper the progress of Panchayati Raj is the existence of party factions and groupism amongst the village people. They are sometimes swayed by narrow considerations of caste and creed and old family feuds handed down from father to son. The elections tend further to aggravate their differences and factious spirit.

It is further argued that the villagers are conservative by habit. They lack the scientific temper and are more prone to orthodoxy and superstition. Therefore, they may not like new changes and resist attempts at progressive reforms.

It has also been pointed out that the elections do not bring out the best leaders available in the village. There are some honest and really capable men who shun groupism and party politics so much that they do not want to seek elections. Moreover, distinctions based on birth, caste and property are so deep-rooted in the hearts and minds of the people that there is little hope for Harijans and the weaker sections who form a minority, to come up. Poverty and backwardness of the villagers has also been adduced as a factor responsible for restraining the village leaders from taking part in social activities. They are so much absorbed in their own bread and butter problem that they have little time to spare for public activities.

These have been some of the arguments advanced by critics of Panchayati Raj. According to them, the remarks of a wag about democracy that, "it is a Government of the poorest, the most ignorant and the most incapable" are applicable to Panchayati Raj.

Let us see what the actual position is. The Panchayati Raj has been in operation for about two years now in a number of States. It has been revealed that the dangers do exist in a more or less degree. We have witnessed some elections taking place on the basis of narrow considerations of caste and creed and that these have aggravated differences and party factions in some villages. Mutual fights

even leading to a chain of murders, have taken place. Some reactionary and orthodox type of Panches have come to hold the reins of office and they have thwarted the progress of development work. Instances have come to light where the Panches have preferred not to call meetings of Panchayats rather than allow lady members of the Panchayat to sit along with them. In case of diseases afflicting herds of cattle, the superstitious Panches have preferred to rely on certain *Mantras* and rituals rather than on proper veterinary aid with the obvious result that hundreds of cattle perished. There have been cases where justice was miscarried and personal friendship or *vendetta* weighed with the Panches to absolve the guilty or punish the innocent. Even the execution of development works was sometimes coloured by a narrow selfish outlook. The interested Panches saw to it that a drinking water well was constructed or streets paved in their neighbourhood in preference to localities where their need was perhaps greater.

BRIGHT SIDE

All these things have happened yet the picture, taken as a whole, is not so gloomy. The villagers though illiterate, have common sense enough to discriminate between right and wrong, the good and the bad. Not only the General Elections but even the Panchayati Raj elections held at various levels in the country have proved beyond a shadow of doubt that they are capable of selecting the right type of leadership. There is nothing to fear so long as this basic core is sound. We see how a new type of young leadership, progressive in outlook, free from caste-prejudices, full of enthusiasm and a spirit of service for their fellow villagers, has come to the fore and replaced the old traditional leadership that looked more to the past than to the future. Many an educated young man who otherwise would have migrated to the cities to lead a life of ease and comfort, have voluntarily adopted to work for the good of their fellow villagers under the Panchayati Raj pattern. Besides striving for their daily bread, they devote lot of time for fulfilling their obligations as Sarpanches and Pradhans.

Many Sarpanches and Pradhans have shown remarkable sense of fairplay and impartiality in dealing out justice and carrying out of development activities. They have not forgotten the old spirit of 'Panch Parmeshwar'. A recent instance brought to light in the Punjab, *viz;* that of a lady Sarpanch who got her own father-in-law punished because of his insolent behaviour towards a lady teacher is a pointer towards that. This is not an isolated example. There are many more that brighten the prospects of Panchayati Raj.

Though the Panchayati Raj elections, carried on party lines have left some bitterness and differences amongst the villagers, yet it will be wrong to exaggerate them. The effect has been rather temporary and with passage of time these are losing the sharpness of their edge. Indeed, the number of unanimous elections held at various levels is more than expected and if anything, they go to prove the simplicity and unity of our villagers. The average villager known for his orthodox nature is after all not so conservative. He is intelligent enough to appreciate the advantages of any new machine or system and is not averse to its adoption. During the past few years of the operation of the C.D. programme, he has shown sufficient adaptability to improved methods of production.

FACING RISKS

Even assuming that all these defects and short-comings existed amongst the village-folk, that would provide little justification for denying freedom to them. A good Government can be no substitute for self-government. One and all of these arguments were advanced by the British rulers to forestall the transfer of power to our countrymen. Yet independence came and in spite of the prophets of doom, the country has been marching forward to progress and prosperity. The so-called defects are in fact, noticeable even at the Central and State levels where group politics, mutual jealousies and rivalries manifest themselves every now and then. Why blame the poor villagers alone for that?

(*Continued on page 6*)

TO OUR READERS

Dear Friend,

There can be no doubt that you want, as we do, this journal to be a vital organ of the Panchayati Raj movement which is now fast spreading throughout the country. How can that be done ? In the first place, you would like to know what is happening at the Centre. We are in a position to keep you informed of the important steps taken here in Krishi Bhavan from time to time. But that alone won't do. It should be a two-way traffic. What is happening on the field is equally, if not more important. And our journal should reflect that in ample measure. For that we need your co-operation. Unless you act as our "eyes and ears", we cannot deliver the goods. This is how you can help us.

There are Panches, Pradhans, Progressive farmers and village artisans, Gram Sevaks and other officials who have done outstanding work in their respective spheres. They are the heroes of our movement. It is but proper that these "Sons of the Soil" should find a place of honour in our journal. Their stories of achievement along with illustrative photographs will be most welcome from you. Similarly, we would like to have accounts of villages and Panchayats that have done outstanding work in the development field.

As you have been doing in the past, please continue sending us letters giving your field experiences, problems and the suggested solutions. It is only through the pooled experience of all of us that we can hope to make progress.

The medium of language need not present any difficulty. Most of the States have already started publication of the Panchayati Raj journal in the regional languages and matters of interest from this journal are included in them. Those readers who want to send matter in the regional languages may do so at the address of the Editors of the State Panchayati Raj journals. We will make use of them when published in those journals. Though this will mean extra trouble for you. Yet I do hope that in the interest of the Panchayati Raj movement, which we are all keen to make a success, you will not mind doing this 'labour of love'. Shall I add that we have also decided to pay at the usual rates for the articles and photographs published in the journal. Hoping to receive an active response.

1.3.62 *Yours Sincerely,*
Krishi Bhavan. The Editor
New Delhi.

A CHANGED MAN

Sir,

It is an open secret that most of the Gram Sevaks are not satisfied with their present status and nature of duties. They stay in the job simply because they cannot get a better one. Until a small incident a few months ago, I was also like one of them. I have put in five years of service as Gram Sevak. All these years I regarded my working in the rural areas as a compulsory punishment. Although a matriculate, I always thought myself to be a 'babu', averse to manual labour and keen to run away to the city for recreation. I did not like the sight of ill-clad poor villagers. Whenever I talked to them, I did so rather condescendingly with an air of superiority. With such an attitude of mind, I could hardly be a successful Gram Sevak.

One day, while returning to my circle Headquarters,

I hurriedly passed by some fields when a familiar voice greeted me. I looked up and to my astonishment I saw Ganesan who, half-naked with his dhoti tucked up, was working with a spade in his hand in the field. He had been my class fellow and had passed the Matriculation Examination with flying colours the same year as I had done. Seeing him, my assumed air of superiority melted away. He introduced me to his wife who was also working along with him in the field. I asked him the reason why he did not take up some Government service. He said that he preferred to do honest hard work like farming and was perfectly contented to lead a simple life in the village. His reply left me completely dumb. It was a severe hit at my own hollowness and hypocrisy. "What a pity! I do not take interest in the work amongst village people even though I am paid for it. And here is a man who has voluntarily taken to the simple and hard life of a villager," thought I. The incident left a great impression on my mind and I decided to be true to myself and to do my duty for duty's sake. I gave up writing applications and trying for other jobs for after all money is not the only factor in life. I have developed sincere interest in my own work. Today, I find the greatest joy in doing service to the poor, illiterate villagers. I feel that my job is a God-given opportunity for doing practical field work which is denied even to the highest officials. The latter might plan and administer but of what avail are their efforts without corresponding honest and hard work on the field? My job, is, therefore, as important as that of any body else's. Things would change for the better if only we adopted the right attitude.

21-12-61 Yours etc.,
Pollibeta, *C. M. Medappa,*
MYSORE *Gram Sevak*

* * *

ANY SOLUTION PLEASE?

Sir,

The sad state of affairs prevailing in Panchayat Kharwar of Rohtak district in the Punjab seems to confirm the worst fears of the critics of Panchayati Raj. What would, for example, happen if the elected Panches are of an orthodox character and are reactionary in nature? Mutual bickerings, bitterness and no work at all. Ever since the Kharwar Panchayat was formed and a woman member was nominated about one and a half year ago, the Panches have been persistently opposing the attendance of the Panchayat meeting by the lady member. The Sarpanch has not called a single meeting lest this should lead to an open conflict. The result is perfect stalemate in the development activities of the village. On the other hand, the entire atmosphere of the village has been vitiated since persons holding differing views have joined the two camps. Even the Chief Minister who was apprised of the situation, has not succeeded in resolving the crisis. Is there any solution please?

10-2-62 Yours etc.,
Chanderhas Sharma
Kharwar,
Rohtak (Punjab)

(It is evident that the permanent solution of such problems does not lie in the hands of the Government. What is needed is to educate the minds of the Panches and the villagers as a whole. The Gram Sabha should form a strong public opinion for opposing unfair discrimination against women.—Ed.)

* * *

SOIL FOR FOOD AND FOOD FOR SOIL

Sir,

The evil effects on crops of poor soil, deficient in one chemical constituent or the other are too well-known. But it is equally true that the addition of too much chemical fertilisers is also harmful to the fertility of soil and growth of plants. Experiments have shown that though the excessive use of fertilisers might result in accelerated growth of crops and vegetables, yet they do suffer in quality. Huge cauliflowers and cabbages grown with artificial fertilisers are not as tasty as those grown on normal soil. Consistent use of chemical fertilisers on soils over a number of years is known to have made them barren. In fact, the best nourishing food for soil is the organic matter coming from the vegetable and animal worlds. Discriminate use of chemical fertilisers in the presence of

(Continued on page 11)

Questions and Answers

VIDUR

Question: What were the causes of the decay of the ancient Panchayat System? Were any attempts made in the past to revive them?

Answer: With the advent of the British rule in India and the consequent centralisation of law and order as well as the political administration of the country, the Panchayats began to lose their power and prestige amongst the people. The inevitable advance of science and technology brought about changes in the economic system too. With centralised production and development of communications, products from large scale factories came into the villages, thus destroying the self-sufficient and inter-dependent system of the village economy. This also resulted in the shattering of the cohesion of the village community. Caste system which held the community in order in the past began to lose ground. All these socio-economic forces gradually brought about the decay of the old Panchayat system. However, their usefulness was recognised even during the days of the British rule itself. Efforts were made to revive them as early as 1882. A Royal Commission on Decentralisation was set up in 1907 to find out the causes of the decay of the old Panchayats and how these could be revived. The Montague Chelmsford Reforms, while discussing local self-rule, laid stress on the revival of the Panchayat system. It was as a result of these recommendations that when the Local-Self Government Act was passed in 1919 and the subject of local self-Government was transferred to the Provinces that attempts were made to form Panchayats. The introduction of the Government of India 1935 Act sought to further strengthen the Panchayat system. As soon as the National Interim Government took over in 1946, new legislative measures were adopted in most of the States to reorganise the Panchayats. The Constitution itself lays down a clear directive for the devolution of powers to Panchayats so as to "enable them to function as units of self-Government".

* * *

Question: What are the main advantages of Panchayati Raj?

Answer: The main advantages of Panchayati Raj are the same as result from freedom and democracy. It seeks to instil a sense of responsibility amongst the rural people. In this way, they begin to take greater interest in their own welfare and development. There is no better way of developing the personality of an individual or a group than by entrusting them responsibility. They learn to grow through trial and error. Besides, it provides them an opportunity, which they never had in the past of planning and administering their own affairs. They are the best judge of their real needs. Therefore, when they themselves make the plans these are more realistic. And when they are also called upon to implement them, they naturally feel more interested and enthusiastic in carrying them out. They pool their own local resources in addition to the Government grants to carry the schemes to a successful end. Thus the intensity of development work, and people's participation through mobilisation of local resources increases considerably. This also helps them to develop their community spirit by giving them opportunities of service to each other and the community as a whole. This goes to mould village leadership at various levels,—the village, the Block and the District. The village people learn to think in wider terms of community and the nation and not merely as caste or religious groups. As they march in step with the people of other states towards planned development under Panchayati Raj pattern, they develop a feeling of oneness and of belonging to the country as a whole. Therefore, it encourages national

(Continued on page 6)

FACING THE RISKS

(*Continued from page 2*)

Be that as it may, there is no other way of improving the personality of a human being than by entrusting responsibility to him. He learns and grows by struggling through trial and error.

Of course, we have to safeguard ourselves against any lurking dangers. Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the necessity of spreading literacy and social education as understood in its broadest sense. The people should be conversant with their rights and responsibilities as free citizens of a democractic country. They must have a reasonable level of general knowledge and understanding about our country and the world. It is with that aim in view that the Government of India are bringing out books under the basic literature scheme. The Voluntary Organisations can play a big role in this programme of mass education. The role of the officials under the C.D. programme has been primarily that of extension agents from the very beginning. But under the Panchayati Raj, there is further shift towards the educative and persuasive aspect. Since the responsibility for the programme has now been passed on to the non-officials, the primary role of officials is now that of teachers and guides. There is need for proper and harmonious relationship between the two for the success of the programme.

Apart from common sense and general understanding about things, the village leaders must have competence in organisational and administrative matters. They have to acquaint themselves with the techniques of planning, rules and regulations of business and conduct of meetings. Accordingly, extensive training programmes at various levels are being arranged by the State Governments for the benefit of the lakhs of Panches, Sarpanches and Pradhans all over the country.

In order to ward off the evil effects of keenly contested elections, it is advisable to have unanimous or near-unanimous elections. This will encourage even those men to come forward who are otherwise very competent, dedicated and popular but who shun the hurly burly of electioneering. State Governments have offered various incentives in the form of prizes and remission of land revenue to encourage unanimity. It is a safe formula to keep the Panchayati Raj elections free from politics. A "gentleman's agreement" between various political parties not to set up their respective candidates, will go a long way towards saving the village community from being split up on party basis.

All these protective measures will help the apparatus of Panchayati Raj to work in the desired direction. But ultimately it is on the quality of men,—the non-official representatives who are chosen that the success of the movement depends. With honest, dedicated and selfless village leaders to the fore, the success of Panchayati Raj is assured. What is needed is faith in our own men and the risks, if any, have to be faced with courage and determination to make Panchayati Raj a success—*V.D.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(*Continued from page 5*)

integration, too, which is the vital need of our times. With the official machinery being placed under the control of the non-official representatives of the Panchayati Raj, there is better control and more effective administration. Evils like inefficiency, delay and corruption which go with a bureaucratic and centralised administration, are removed to a large extent. Their complaints become less and if there are any they have largely to blame their ownselves. With a vigilant Gram Sabha, even their non-official representatives cannot afford to be careless or dishonest. Thus, on the whole, there is every chance of the administration brightening up under the Panchayati Raj.

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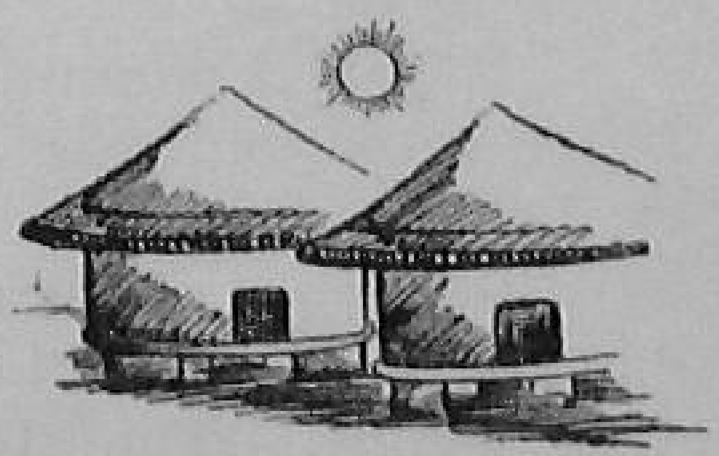

BASNI—PRIDE OF NAGAUR PANCHAYAT SAMITI

Shri Mohd. Usman, Sarpanch, Basni Panchayat

BASNI, a village of 6,800 people in the Nagaur Panchayat Samiti in Rajasthan has made rapid progress under its young and enthusiastic Sarpanch Shri Mohd. Usman. Situated at a distance of 5 miles from the city of Nagaur, it has beautiful natural surroundings. Its beautiful mosque attracts hundreds of visitors who hail it as the "Child of Bombay".

Before the wave of Panchayati Raj swept the State, it was like most other villages—backward in agriculture, a low percentage of literacy and with little or no medical facilities. However, as soon as the village Panchayat came into being under the new Panchayati Raj pattern two years ago, things began to move forward. The villagers were fired with a new hope, over-flowing enthusiasm and a firm determination to lead their village to progress and prosperity. In Mohd. Usman, they saw their leader and chose him to be the Sarpanch.

Education is at the root of all progress. Consequently, they turned their primary attention towards wiping out illiteracy from the village. The "School Chalo" campaign launched throughout Rajasthan found its great echo in village Basni. It was decided to send every child of school-going age to the school. The village has one middle school and a girls' school. To-day there are 640 children in these schools. Little wonder that the village got the first prize in the 'School Chalo' campaign in the district. In view of the mounting enthusiasm of the villagers in the cause of education, need is being felt to convert the Middle school into a High School.

Along with the laying of sound foundations of a bright, progressive and educated young generation, the grown-ups have also not been neglected. Great efforts are being made to make the adults literate and wide-awake through night-classes and social education programmes. The percentage of literacy has gone up to 46.

Agriculture which is the main occupation of the villagers is receiving its due attention. The cultivators have adopted 'Medh-bandi' and other dry-farming practices. But the main hurdle is inaccessibility of water for

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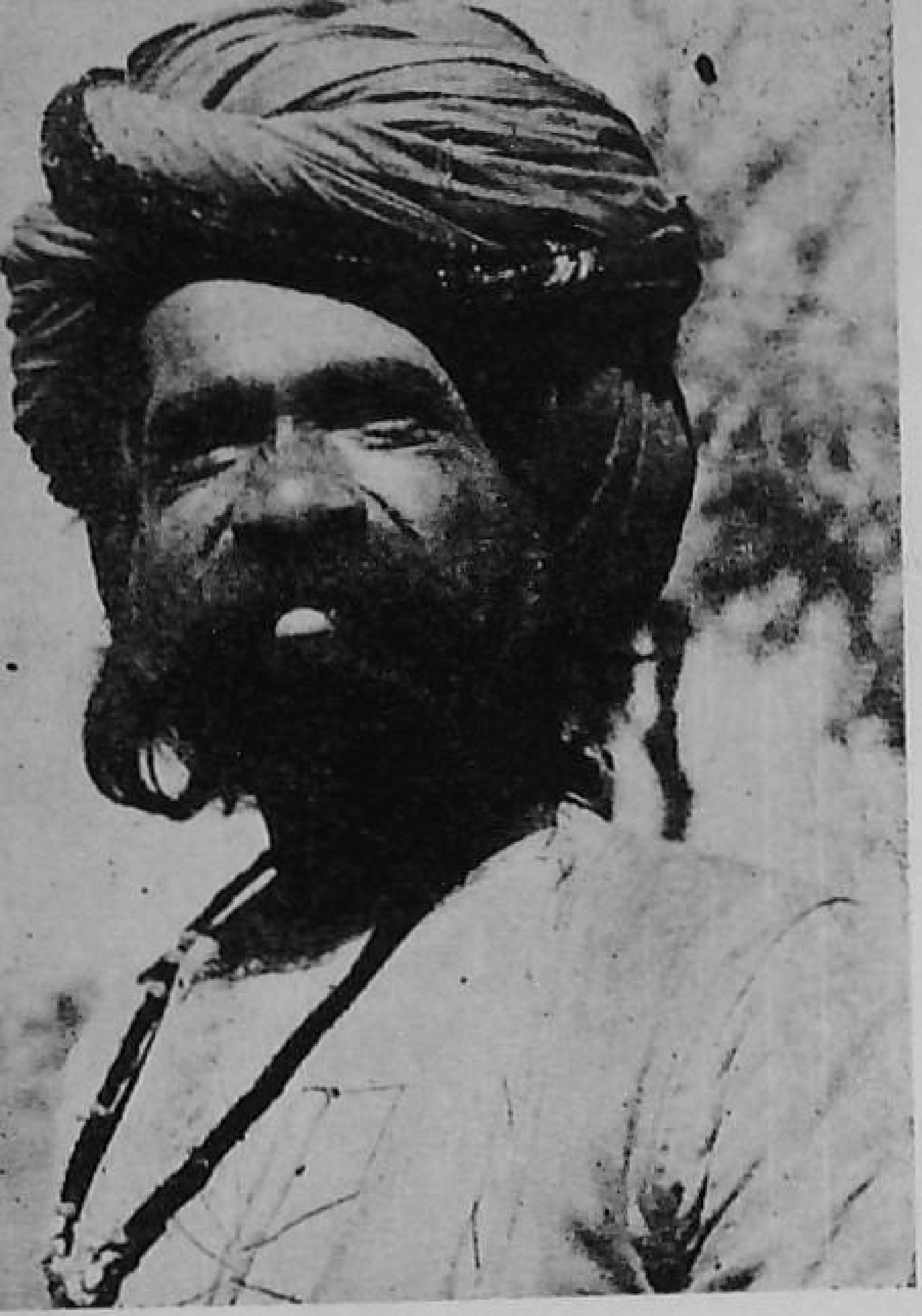


NAGAUR—THE SYMBOL OF

(By Our Special C

It was a hurried trip to Nagaur—the place where the lamp of Panchayati Raj was first lit by the Prime Minister. With sandy tracts for miles around, scanty rainfall, few wells for irrigation and not enough water even for drinking the odds are certainly against men as well as cattle. What impressed me was their spirit, their irrepressible desire to live and progress. It was a sight to see the sturdy turbaned Jawan walking briskly with the long staff in his hand or to see a couple of smart, deer-like bullocks darting forth with a light cart. "Whence comes this life, energy and doggedness ?" I asked. Right in front of the Rest House I was staying in, stood forth the *Chhatri* or the tomb of Amar Singh Rathor, the famous Rajput warrior who defied the might of the ruling Moghuls. This gave me the answer. Perhaps it is the self-same soil and scarce water that brings forth such hardy and courageous youth and the cattle famous for their breed throughout the country.

Nagaur Panchayat Samiti had been a shadow block till October last when it entered the pre-extension stage. Therefore, to expect that the mere formation of the Panchayati Raj bodies under the Panchayati Raj Act without the necessary Extension Agency and the Block budget would produce any remarkable change, is obviously too much. Also it would be improper to compare the achievements of such a backward and impoverished Block with those that are prosperous and economically strong. The latter are in a position to take off. But in order to break the first few hard crusts of poverty and backwardness that hold the pace of progress in a backward area, lot of outside help in money as well as technical guidance is needed. The Samiti is yet to receive these in ample measure.

TEAM SPIRIT

Shri Hari Ram, the young Pradhan of the Panchayat Samiti informed me that the samiti was working as a team and that it was free from party factions. Sixteen out of thirty members of the Samiti had been elected unanimously. The harmonious working of the Samiti was evident from the fact that all the resolutions passed so far by the Samiti have been unanimous. He claimed that there was complete understanding and co-ordination between the non-official representatives and the official team. He showed full awareness of the basic needs of his backward area, such as provision of drinking water, irrigation wells and village industries. He pleaded for liberal Government grant-in-aid since the financial resources of the Panchayats were quite inadequate as they were able to collect only nominal taxes due to the extremely weak economic condition of the people. "What about the income from common lands ?" I inquired. He replied that the ownership of common waste lands had not been vested in the Panchayats till now. The

A small boy indicating the spot on his calf where the guinea worm disease has made its appearance.

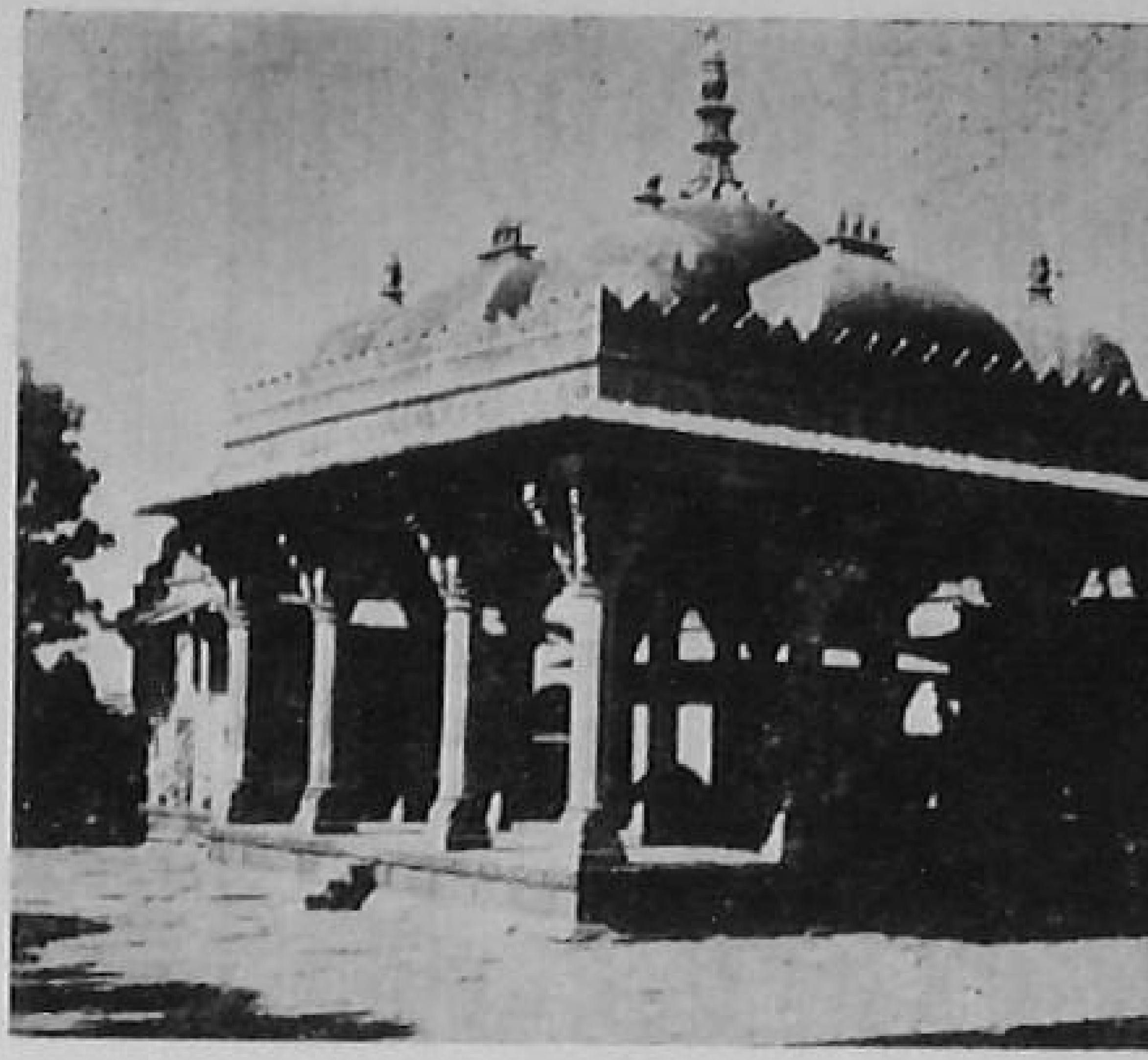
RAJASTHAN'S INDOMITABLE SPIRIT

l Correspondent)

B.D.O., S. Gurcharan Singh who has joined only a few months ago explained to me how the weak financial position of the Samiti was standing in the way of developing its remunerative assets even though the Government had offered grants out of a Free Fund to encourage the same. The conditions attached to the utilisation of this amount are of a forbidding nature, *e.g.*, the samiti is required to offer a matching amount of 60% as against the remaining grant from the Government and the work should ensure a return of at least 7½%. For helping economically backward samitis, perhaps a more workable formula is needed.

We visited village Basni where outstanding work has been done as a result of the efforts made by its young Sarpanch Haji Mohd. Usman and his co-workers. The village has got a Primary Health Centre with 8 beds, a middle School and a Girls' Primary School. A Panchayat Bhavan has also been constructed recently.

Our next visit was to village Tausar where its Sarpanch Mange Lal takes an active interest in the Panchayat activities. This is one of the two or three villages in the whole Block where some irrigated cultivation is carried on. A majority of the residents of this village are 'Malis' who grow vegetables which are a rarity in this part of the country. I was surprised to learn that the *Moolis* and *Methi* grown in this village are unequalled in quality and, therefore, there is a great demand for them. More than rupee one lakh worth of these vegetables are exported from the village every year. But the pity is that it is the middleman who as usual makes the most of the bargain. The earlier the work of marketing these agricultural products is taken up by Co-operatives, the better. Under the Rural Housing Scheme, 11 cheap houses have been built by the Panchayat at a cost of Rs. 1,500 each. A pacca "tanka" has also been constructed to cater to the drinking water requirements of the Harijans. The Sarpanch was critical of the power that has been given to the Development Panchayats and Nyaya Panchayats and thought these were inadequate. Elaborating his point, he remarked that no importance was attached to the decisions of fine or punishment awarded by the Panchayats. Apart from the fact that the decisions of the Panchayats could be appealed against in law-courts, the fines imposed in cases where no appeal was made, remained unrecovered for years. Any body being tried by the Panchayats could abuse or assault the Panches and there was no immediate remedy against such occurrences through measures like



The Chhatri of Amar Singh Rathor, where lie the remains of the brave Rajput warrior of yore.

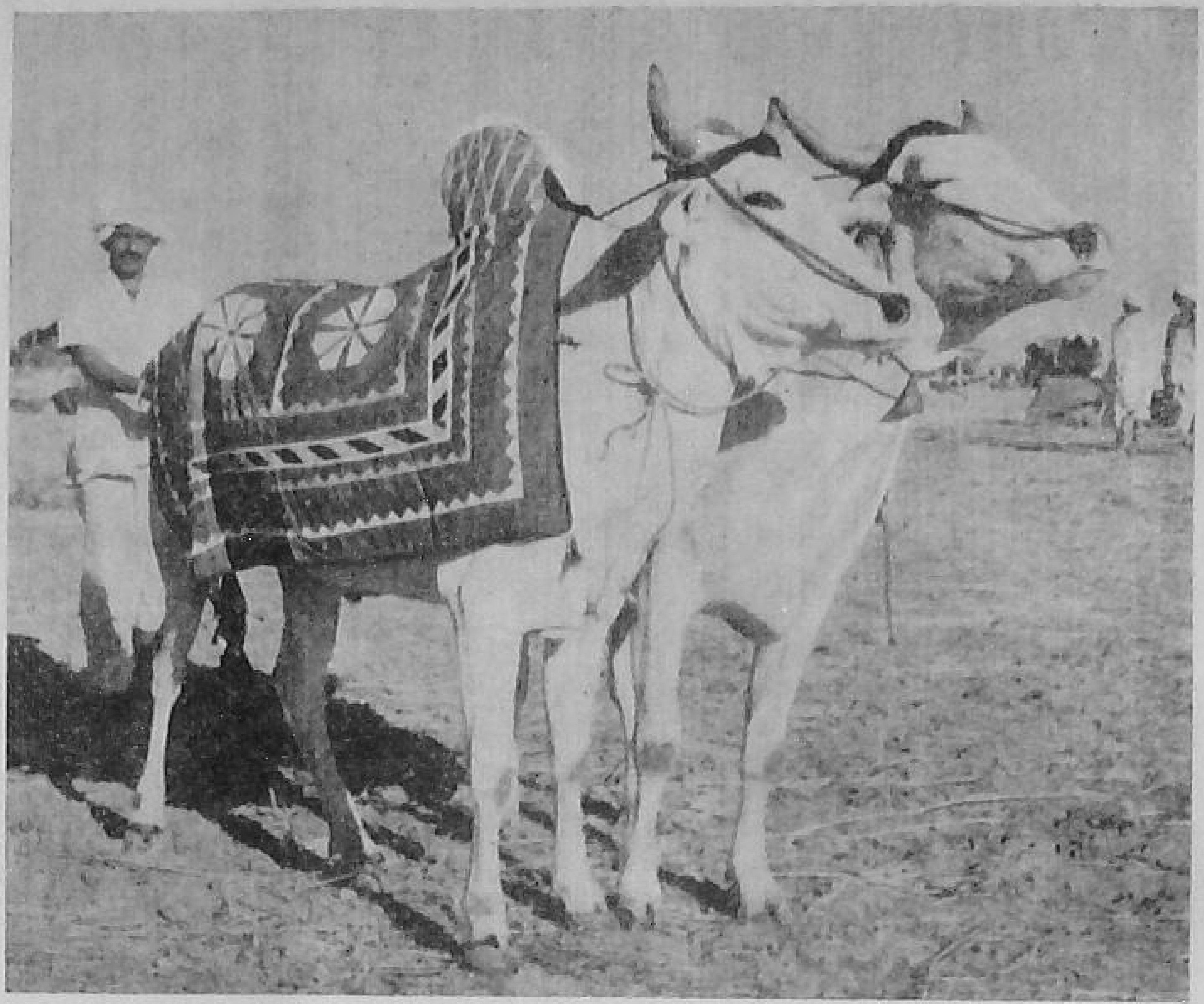
'Contempt of Court'. He felt that unless more powers were given to the Nyaya Panchayats, these will remain mere "hollow reeds". Everyone whom I met supported the idea that to make Development Panchayats really effective, there should be better co-ordination between the Revenue and Development officials at all levels. The complaint was that the Patwari would not attend the monthly meetings of the Panchayats and, therefore, the necessary attestation by him could not be easily procured on loan applications and that there was considerable delay in the realisation of Taccavi loans and other taxes imposed by the Panchayats.

WATER PROBLEM No. 1

Lack of adequate drinking water is their problem No. 1. The wells are very deep and go down upto 400 ft. Each

well may cost upto Rs. 30,000. Even then the water made available may be saltish and unfit to drink. I was given to understand that Bhagirathan efforts were on for the last 8 years to dig a well in Gooda Bhagwandass, a small village but the end was not in sight so far. Consequently, the people prefer the cheaper and more convenient way of drawing their supplies from tanks where the cattle vie with men to quench their thirst. Little wonder that as a result of such insanitary supply of drinking water, diseases like "guinea worm" are commonly prevalent. A few well-off persons construct Pacca pits, what they call "Tanka" in which rain water running down from the tops of Pacca houses is stored for drinking purposes for the whole year round. I saw such a "Tanka" being constructed at the Panchayat Samiti Headquarters itself. The village Panchayat of Basni has resorted to the device of a wind-mill in order to pump water from an open tank into a pacca reservoir where it is to be cleaned and stored for future use. Piped water supply is also expected to be introduced soon into this village. On the whole, the record of work done by the Panchayat Samiti in this connection is quite encouraging. It has helped the construction of 23 new wells and 30 'Tankas' in Schools.

My visit happened to coincide with the big cattle fair which draws about 70,000 cattle from far and near. The valuable Nagauri breed is much in demand there. There was not enough water available for drinking by the cattle. The only supply that could be reached was from one well situated at a distance of one mile from which water was pumped and supplied through a pipe line. It is understood that the Government gets an income of over one lakh every year from the fair, yet adequate supplies for drinking water could not be made till now.



A pair of shining white Nagauri bullocks famous throughout the country for their swiftness and smartness.

COMPULSORY BANISHMENT

Agriculture faces an equally tough problem. Practically the entire 3,00,000 acres of land under cultivation is rain-fed. Only one crop of Bajra and Jawar is taken. And this too when the rains do not fail. At least once in five years, the rain-god does not comply with their wishes. The result is famine. The people have been facing adverse circumstances for the last two years. More than 60 per cent of the people have had to leave their homes with their families and cattle to 'pastures new' in Malva. They would return near the 'Holi' festival. This compulsory banishment is the price they have to pay for having a homeland in this tract. There was some dissatisfaction about the famine relief measures which were considered to be delayed and inadequate. More than this is the slow torture they have to undergo all the year round as a result of low yield per acre. Hardly one maund per bigha is what they get. One wonders how these sons of the soil living mainly on Bajra, with practically no vegetables or fruits but with

(Continued on page 14)

U.P'.s ALL-WOMAN PANCHAYAT

VILLAGE PURAVIJAI, on the banks of the Ganga about five miles away from the Chehanian Block headquarters, is one of the few villages in Uttar Pradesh—and for that matter, in the country —which has the honour of having a Gram Panchayat constituted entirely of women.

All the thirteen members of the Gram Panchayat of village Puravijai are women.

The village, with an area of 1,233 acres, has a population of 910. Women outnumber the men by six.

The bulk of the men in the village carry on business which concerns largely transport of agricultural commodities from different points along the Ganga and the interior. For a large part of the year, they are on the move and, therefore, out of the village. This has thrown the entire responsibility for the developmental work in village on the women.

Two of the progressive women in the village, 45-year old Smt. Mehraje and 40-year old Smt. Tapeshwari felt the need for a school in the village. They secured land, collected Rs. 5,000 from other women, persuaded them to do Shramdan and set up the primary school.

The success achieved by women, led by these two, gave the inhabitants a confidence. It was no surprise, therefore, that when the Gram Panchayat was recently elected, Smt. Mehraje was chosen as the President of the Gram Panchayat and Smt. Tapeshwari as the Vice-President. The other twelve members of the Gram Panchayat were also women. Meetings of the Gram Panchayat are held regularly and the budget adopted. The accounts are regularly checked.

Since its election the all-woman Panchayat has been responsible for the sinking of a drinking water well and for enforcing cleanliness throughout the village.

LETTERS

(*Continued from page 4*)

organic manure alone may prove beneficial. They should be applied in proper doses after ascertaining the nature of soil deficiency and the kind of crop to be raised.

It is to be realised that there is a well-knit cycle in nature and the harmony and interdependence between various components cannot be disturbed with impunity. Mother earth sustains all life, both vegetable and animal. That is why we call it 'Dharti Mata'. The best way to health is by eating food that is grown on healthy soil. At the same time, it is essential to maintain the health of the soil by returning to it the refuse of everything that has come from it, *e.g.* leaves, plants, bones, cowdung and human excreta. Let us feed the soil so that it can feed us.

10-2-62 Yours etc.
Jaglebet. *V. D. Malgavkar*

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

GRAM PANCHAYAT BHAVAN

A LONG-FELT need of village Khubala in Maharashtra was met with when a spacious building was constructed recently to serve as a Gram Panchayat Bhavan there recently. The Bhavan has been constructed by the local artisans at a total cost of Rs. 4,000.

* * *

SAMITIS PREPARE VILLAGE PRODUCTION PLANS

PANCHAYAT SAMITIS in Rajasthan have gone ahead with the preparation of village production plans. In Bundi district, family and village plans were discussed in the Gram Sabhas and finalised.

* * *

RESOLVE TO DO SOCIAL WORK

THE ZIRA BLOCK Samiti in the Punjab has unanimously resolved that on the first of every Indian month the entire population of the block, including the Samiti members, would suspend their personal work and earnestly attend to development works. It has also decided that every member of the Samiti would take charge of at least one village for this purpose. This voluntary programme will begin on the first of Chaitra, that is in March.

* * *

WAR AGAINST LOCUST

HUGE LOCUST swarms had invaded Rajasthan and Gujarat on an unprecedented scale last year. 61 out of 114 villages of Rahpur-Kutch had been affected by the menace. Due to timely action taken by the people of the Block area, the winged menace was crushed down and crops worth lakhs of rupees were saved. Guided by the Block staff, Panchayats, farmers' unions, school children and even the police rose to the occasion and waged a relentless battle against the locust for nearly two months. Most of the insects were destroyed at the hopper stage. The school children enjoyed driving them into dug-out trenches and nearby bushes where they were either buried or burnt. Spraying of Gamaxine powder was resorted to on a large scale to put an end to the menace completely.

Hoppers concentrate around bushes where they are easily disposed of by spraying gamaxine or by burning.

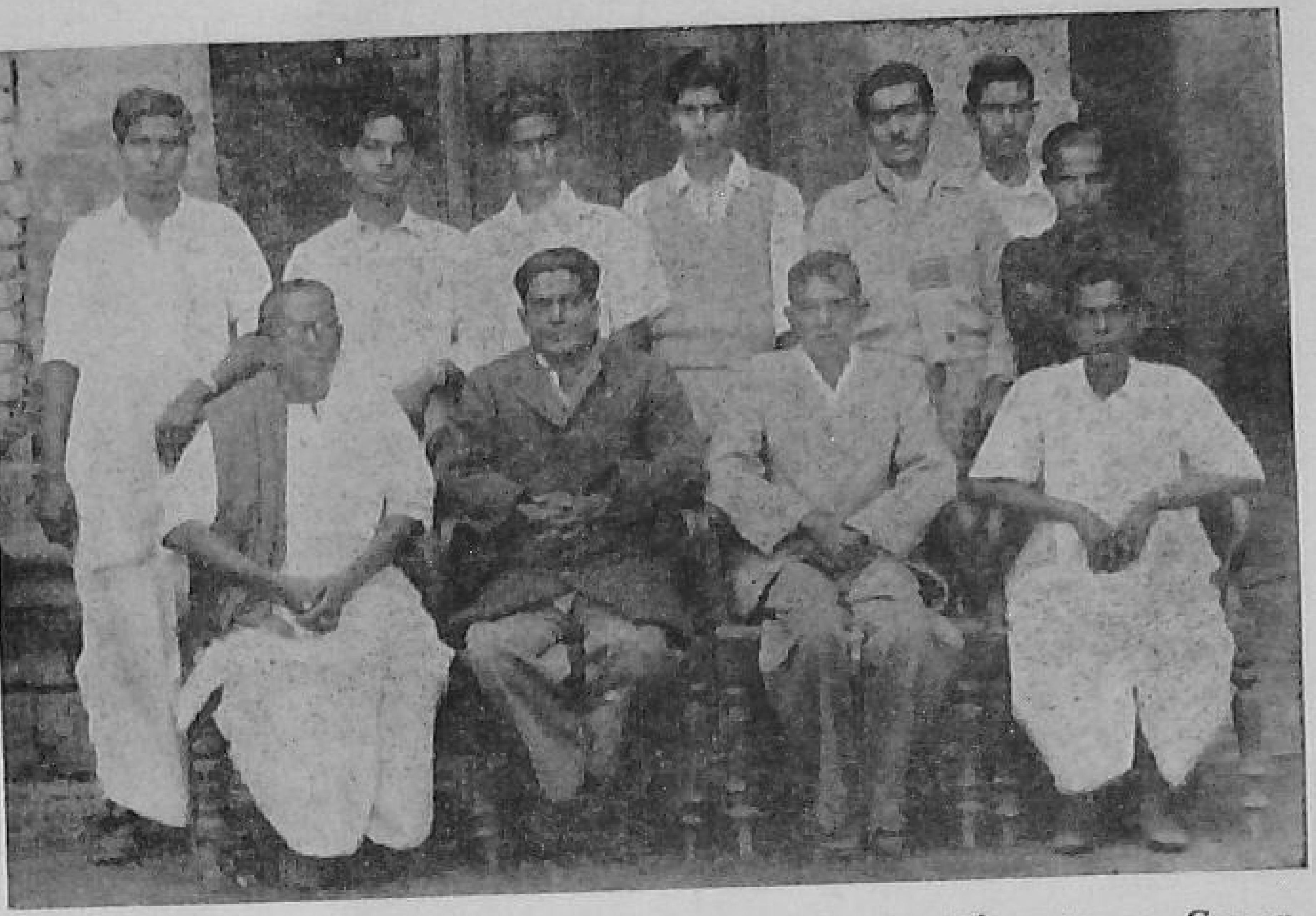
Spraying is one of the effective ways of combating locust. Gamaxine powder is being sprayed on the crop where the hoppers have settled.

HUGE INCOME FROM FISHERY

THE PANCHAYAT BOARD of Rayabhupalapatnam village (Peddapuram Block—East Godavary District) in Andhra Pradesh, has taken on lease the fishery rights on the local Regamma Tank. During 1960-61, the Panchayat paid a sum of Rs. 3,200 to the State Government for the lease hold; the fishing operations were conducted by 40 local Gram Sahayaks who were trained in the art of fishing and the total yield of fish was valued approximately at Rs. 20,000. Very good revenue is expected from this tank during the current year also and the Panchayat Board intends to build a hospital and a veterinary dispensary with the income derived from fisheries.

* * *

TRAINING OF NON-OFFICIALS



Some of the trainees seen along with the B.D.O., Bharatpore, Supervisor of Panchayats and the Anchal Pradhan during a Training Camp of Panchayat Secretaries held at Jajan in West Bengal.

WEST BENGAL

TRAINING FOR PANCHAYAT SECRETARIES

ANCHAL PANCHAYATS have been functioning in five out of 8 Anchals in Bharatpore Block of Murshidabad district in West Bengal. Since it had not been possible to send the Panchayat Secretaries for training at the State training centre, it was decided to give them some training on the spot. Consequently a short training course for a week was drawn and a camp was held at Jajan on 10th December. They were imparted training in book-keeping, framing of budgets, and drawing up of assessment lists etc. They were also given necessary instructions regarding submission of reports and returns. Emphasis was laid on the principle of self-help and that they should mobilise people's resources and energies towards the fulfilment of various development schemes and other welfare activities. Talks were given by various extension officers. They were taken to Demonstration centres, Health centres and other places of interest round about. The camp terminated with a cultural function. The Anchal Pradhan, the Supervisor of Panchayats and the B.D.O., Shri K. P. Singh played a notable part in making the training camp a success.

* * *

ASSAM

GRAMSAHAYAKS' CAMPS

SIXTEEN GRAM SAHAYAKS' camps were organised in 7 Blocks of Assam during the quarter ending September 1961. 499 functional leaders were trained in these camps.

* * *

BIHAR

TRAINING BY PERIPATETIC TEAMS

THE TRAINING of non-official personnel of Panchayati Raj bodies is being imparted by peripatetic teams. The State Government have already entrusted the running of one of the five PRTCs allotted to them during 1961-62 to the State Panchayat Parishad who will also be asked to run the remaining four centres. As and when new centres are opened and given to non-official agencies, the peripatetic teams will confine their activities to those areas not covered by these centres.

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JAMMU & KASHMIR

WOMEN'S CAMPS

Two WOMEN'S camps were held in the State during the quarter ending September 1961. 40 women participated in these camps.

* * *

RAJASTHAN

PANCHAYAT SAMITI ADHYAN KENDRAS

THE TRAINING for chairmen of Nyaya Panchayats and members of Panchayat Samitis continued in all the Panchayat Samiti Adhyan Kendras. The training of the

members of Nyaya Panchayats is expected to be taken up soon.

* * *

TRAINING CAMP FOR PROGRESSIVE GRAM SAHAYAKS

Training camps of 10 days' duration each were held at the agricultural colleges in Jobner and Udaipur, during December 1961, for advanced training in Agriculture to the progressive Gram Sahayaks.

* * *

UTTAR PRADESH

PANCHAYATI RAJ CONFERENCE

A Panchayati Raj Conference was held at Ghaziabad in the 1st week of December 1961. The Conference was attended by the Prime Minister who also inaugurated the Panchayati Raj Sammelan in Saidabad village in Allahabad District held on the 29th December, 1961.

BASNI—PRIDE OF NAGAUR PANCHAYAT SAMITI

(*Continued from page 7*)

irrigation. At present only one crop of Jowar & Bajra is taken. With better irrigation facilities being planned, the agriculture will also improve considerably.

It has also a Primary Health Centre with six beds. Recently Shri Mohd. Usman and Shri Ghulam Mohd. Umar contributed Rs. 10,000 as donation and got two rooms built for the Health Centre. Another generous person Shri Isa Munnoo has presented a microscope worth about Rs. 3,000 to the Centre.

NAGAUR—THE SYMBOL OF RAJASTHAN'S INDOMITABLE SPIRIT

(*Continued from page 10*)

plenty of ghee and milk, grow up to be such sturdy jawans. The average holding of a farmer is 20 to 30 acres, yet even the possession of so much dust hardly enables him to outgrow his poverty. His average income is not more than Rs. 500. With no prospects of canal irrigation supplies in the near future, agriculture can make headway only if more wells and borings are made to tap the underground water resources. This involves huge investment of money which should be made available under special schemes in addition to the normal block budget allotment.

NAGAURI BREED

Rearing of pedigree cows, bullocks and herds of sheep provides a good source of income to the people. The Nagauri breed is famous for its qaulities throughout India. villagers have developed an art of rearing good calves. They do not milk the cow whose calf they propose to rear but reserve the entire yield for the young one. They feed them on *Til* and *Cheepta* (*i.e.*, Jowar). This gives the cattle a white glaze on the body. Under the 'key village scheme' good progress has been achieved. The Artificial Insemination Centre which is now run under the supervision of the Panchayat Samiti is proving popular and about 10,000 cattle have been served from the centre. The Samiti has distributed 26 bulls to various villages. There is a big Government Breeding Cattle Farm also. Besides, seven cattle breeding farms and 22 sheep breeding farms owned and managed by private individuals have been established.

There is great need for village industries to provide employment to the villagers who remain idle for practically half the year. The condition of the landless labourers and artisans is still worse and needs special attention.

VOLUNTARY EFFORTS

It is in the field of education that the Block has made the greatest progress. The number of Primary Schools has risen from 43 to 64 and the number of children attending the schools has almost doubled. Girls' education has also caught on. Though the number of girls going to schools has increased four times, yet as compared to the number of boys attending the school, it is still far too small. School building activity has received a great fillip. Before the Panchayati Raj was ushered in, there was hardly any pacca school building. To-day, there are 25 pacca school buildings and 8 more are under construction.

People's voluntary efforts have been greatly activised. The Panchayats have spent over one lakh of rupees on school-buildings, drinking water wells and other social welfare activities.

Around the States

ANDHRA PRADESH

REGULAR MEETINGS

On the recommendations of the State Sammelan on Panchayati Raj held at Tirupathi in October 1961, the State Government issued instructions to Zila Parishads and Panchayat Samitis to hold meetings regularly of two-days duration once every quarter. The meetings at the District level will, in particular, review the progress of agricultural production schemes, village industries schemes and utilisation of rural manpower. Likewise, the schemes for increasing agricultural production, village industries and the programmes for weaker sections of the community will figure prominently in the meetings at the Block level. The importance of regular meetings of the Village Panchayats and the collection of taxes and fees by them will also be emphasized at the Block meetings.

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INCREASE IN LOCAL & EDUCATION CESS

The Government of Andhra Pradesh have increased the local and education cess from 31 nP. per rupee of land revenue to 50 nP. in the Andhra area and from 12 nP. to 31 nP. in the Telengana area. The receipts from this cess, estimated at Rs. 4.25 crores, will be made available to the Panchayati Raj institutions.

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REVENUE OFFICERS TO INSPECT PANCHAYAT OFFICES

For providing systematic guidance and supervision to the various Panchayati Raj bodies, the Government of Andhra Pradesh have prescribed regular inspections of the offices of the Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads. The Revenue Sub-Divisional Officer has been made the Inspecting Officer of the Panchayat Samiti offices. The State Government have also framed detailed questionnaire for these inspections.

* * * *

BIHAR

POSTS RESERVED FOR DESERVING GRAM SEVAKS

The State Government have formulated detailed proposals for reservation of certain percentage of vacancies of supervisory posts of different departments at the Block level to be filled by promotion of deserving Gram Sevaks.

* * * *

PUNJAB

PANCHAYAT & LAND REVENUE RECORDS

The Government of Punjab have issued instructions that copies of all the entries in the village revenue records relating to revenue assessment, mutations etc. should be furnished to the village Panchayats within a fortnight, so that the villagers will have free access to such records and get any corrections made in the entries within a period of two months. This provision, it is expected, would reduce corruption on the part of the Revenue Patwaris.

* * * *

RAJASTHAN

MED-BUNDI WORK

The Government of Rajasthan had constituted a committee for the evaluation of *med-bundi* work by the Panchayat Samitis during 1960. The committee has since submitted its report. One of the main recommendations of the committee is that in future intensive *med-bundi* work should be confined only to such selected areas where technical officers in soil conservation are available.

* * * *

ORISSA

KENDU TRADE PROFITS FOR PANCHAYATS

The Government of Orissa have decided that out of the net profits derived by the Government from the trade in kendu (bidi) leaf, a

(*Continued on page 16*)

PROHIBITION PROGRAMME & C. D. STAFF

The Union Ministry of Community Development & Co-operation, while clarifying the role of the Community Development Agency in the Prohibition Programme has, in a circular letter issued to all State Governments, stated that creation of public opinion in favour of prohibition should be treated as part of social education activities. Accordingly, the staff of Community Development Agency might associate itself with the educational aspect of the Prohibition Programme but not get involved in any way in the enforcement or implementation of the same.

* * * *

ASSOCIATION OF NON-OFFICIALS

The Ministry of Community Development & Co-operation has impressed on the State Governments the need for associating non-official leadership in securing the achievement of targets set in the co-operative sector. Towards this end, the State Governments have been requested to involve fully the leadership available in the Panchayati Raj institutions.

* * * *

CO-OPERATIVE FARMING

Pilot Projects: 119 co-operative farming societies have been registered so far with a membership of 1,880 and land pooled amounting to 12,840 acres.

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PANCHAYATI RAJ TRAINING CENTRES

38 Panchayati Raj Training Centres have been allocated to the following States out of the 50 Centres sanctioned for 1961-62: Andhra Pradesh 3, Maharashtra 8, Mysore 4, Madhya Pradesh 4, Rajasthan 5 and Uttar Pradesh 14.

* * * *

PANCHAYAT SAMITIS

Prime Minister Shri Nehru, while addressing workers of the Bharat Sevak Samaj of Bihar recently said that the Panchayat Samitis should ultimately take the responsibility of looking after the needs of everyone in the village and thus become an insurance against illness, unemployment and other disabilities. He called upon the Panchayat Samitis to infuse the spirit of Co-operation among the villagers and make them live and work as one family. He laid emphasis on Co-operation in agriculture and desired that as many Co-operative farms should be established as possible.

* * * *

DISTRIBUTION OF BASIC AND CULTURAL LITERATURE

With a view to spread social education amongst the rural people, the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation has decided to supply to each Block 20 copies in the regional language and one copy in Hindi of every book brought out under the Basic and Cultural Literature Scheme. The Block agency would further distribute these copies to Panchayat libraries or other libraries.

* * * *

AROUND THE STATES

(*Continued from page 15*)

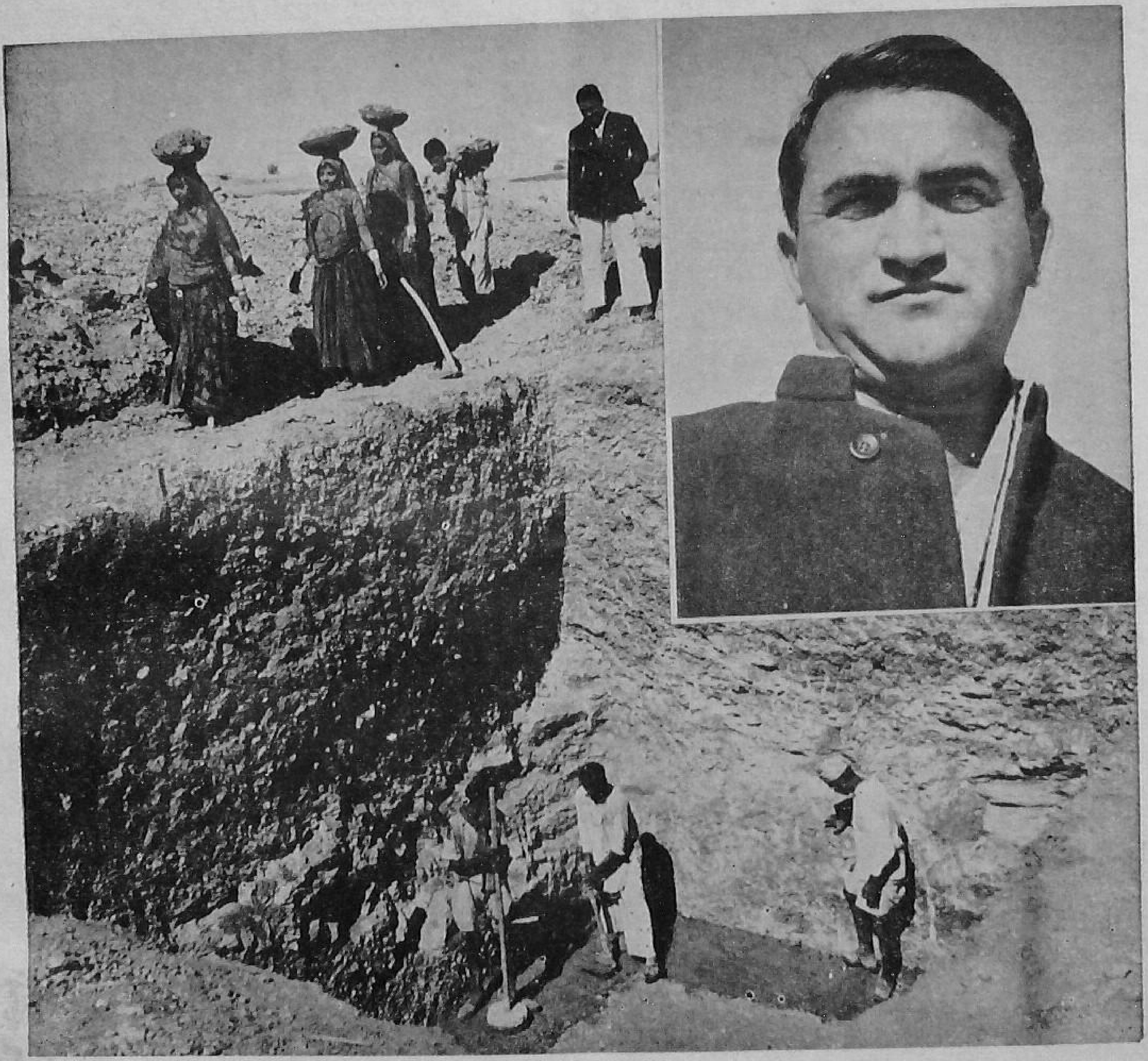
minimum of 50% should be paid to the Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats. The necessary legislation in the form of the Orissa Kendu Leaf (Control of Trade) Act has been passed by the State Legislature.

UTTAR PRADESH

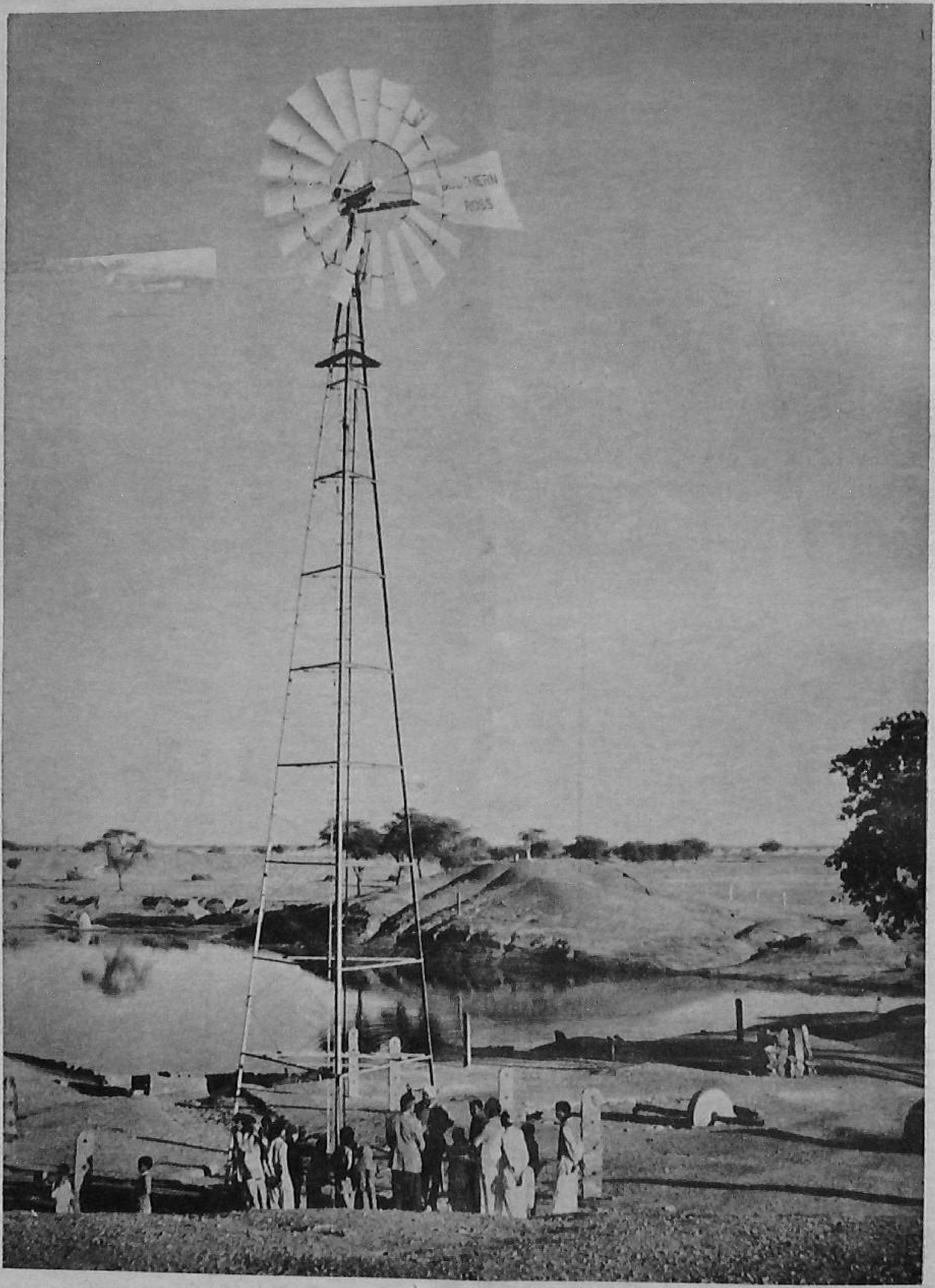
GRAM SEVAKS FROM AMONGST PANCHAYAT SECRETARIES

The Government of Uttar Pradesh have decided to recruit Gram Sevaks from amongst the Panchayat Secretaries, in future. Instructions to this effect were issued to the District Planning Officers/Additional District Magistrates in December 1961.

SOLVING DRINKING WATER PROBLEM



A pucca 'tanka' is being constructed at the Panchayat Samiti Headquarters of Nagaur in Rajasthan. Here, rain water will be kept stored for future use of the Samiti staff. Shri Hari Ram, Pradhan of the Samiti is having a look at the work in progress.



A wind-mill has been recently set up in village Basni in Nagaur Samiti of Rajasthan. This will help pump water from an open tank into a reservoir where it will be cleaned and stored to meet the daily drinking water requirements of the village. Plans are afoot for laying pipes for carrying water to convenient places in the village.

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